

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION

Children, Youth and Family Services Program practice leaders

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| Date of consultation: | 5 September 2017 |
| Group consulted with: | Children, Youth and Family Services Program practice leaders |
| Number of attendees: | 11 |
| Name of organisations: | Companion House, Northside Community Service, Barnardos, YWCA Canberra, Belconnen Community Service, Families ACT, Community Services Directorate – CYFSP, Woden Community Service, ACT Council of Social Services, Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation |

Key themes arising from the consultation

- A need for more information and awareness in the community of available services and support, including community housing providers. There are many services in the ACT but there is a lack of up-to-date knowledge about the different supports that can be offered to people.
- More community development programs to build community in new suburbs and help integrate new public housing tenants into the community.
- Increase choice and diversity in housing types in Canberra – for example, look at increasing numbers of townhouses and duplexes/triplexes – but there is a need to balance increasing density with community needs.
- Work with developers, businesses, planners, the sector and the ACT Government to identify the barriers to developing more affordable housing and remove them.
- More assistance for young people to develop life skills, like budgeting, cooking and cleaning.
- More supported accommodation options and allow longer periods of support.
- Develop more group share models as options for people, with separate bedrooms and bathrooms and shared living areas

Key quotes

- “It’s going to be a long road but we have a shared responsibility for this issue.”
- “As a single individual, there is no way I will be able to afford a house on a single income.”
- “We need a variety of housing types – there needs to be bigger variety in Canberra and there needs to be infrastructure and social policy options in Canberra.”



- “I would support more townhouse development – develop two on a block where there used to be one house, but maybe not five. It’s important to look at the impact on the community.”
- “I don’t like density at all – we need more services, as we build more suburbs we need to be smarter – bring the services to the people, don’t bring the people to the services.”
- “Make community where people live.”
- “In many northside suburbs, there’s houses but no shops and services – we need more services in the suburbs that are being developed. Government offices should be out there.”
- “I know there would be some clients who would suit a tiny house development – it would be really good for people to have their own space – could be an option for people who don’t like to live in shared accommodation. There would need to be supports on site, be close to public transport and close to services.”
- “I like the idea of saying to developers, you are making money, the city is looking after you and you should pay the community back through providing some affordable housing.”

What is working well?

- Concentrations of disadvantage are being reduced – social housing is well distributed.
- The commitment to matching tenants' needs to properties in the relocation program that is part of public housing renewal.
- Social landlord model works well – good support provided to tenants, including the model of intensive support available to those with the most complex issues; Housing ACT staff provide high quality service.
- Supportive Tenancy Service plays an important role in addressing trauma, sustaining tenancies and preventing homelessness.
- Fast response by Havelock House for young people needing short term accommodation.
- Belconnen Community Service Youth Employment Hub is improving independence for young people and SPARK training programs are great collaborative initiatives, upskilling potentially disadvantaged individuals.
- Stamp duty is being phased out – that is great but it should be faster. Speed up the removal of stamp duty for all first home buyers.
- Share housing provides a good interim option while waiting for public housing.

What could be improved?

- The design of some new public housing complexes in new suburbs make them too conspicuous.
- Access to information about wait times for public housing by property size and region would be useful.
- More supported accommodation options and longer periods of support.
- More group share accommodation for older women.
- Provide incentives for public housing tenants to find employment.
- More physically accessible social and private housing.
- Build awareness of community housing providers (CHPs) in the ACT
- Invite new CHPs to develop in the ACT under conditions.
- Reduce restrictions on green spaces: review land planning processes and reduce 'red tape'.
- Reduce land taxes.

Public housing underutilisation

- Allowing people to remain close to their supports is key.
- Provide incentives to downsize e.g. assistance with moving, choice of location.

Personal support plans

- May help identify hoarding/squalor issues early on, but plans would need accountability about meeting goals.
- May be offensive to some tenants. Others who are linked with support services would already have plans.
- A plan without proper resourcing could be destructive. Housing ACT Housing Managers are already overloaded and would not have capacity to be responsible for support plans.

New ideas

- Community development work in new suburbs, led by community organisations, for the whole community as well as public housing tenants.
- Provide information – stories of good experiences for landlords who are thinking about providing houses for social housing.
- Transfer land and housing to community providers to build innovative housing.
- Develop 5 bedroom/bathroom rental options for shared living for young people.
- Develop life skills for young people in a supported accommodation model.
- Skills development for public housing tenants e.g. life skills and budgeting.
- Assist with costs for landlords like subsidies or an assurance that the bill will be paid to cover rent and damages; offset running costs for affordable rental.
- Establish a not-for-profit/philanthropic real estate agency (like Home Ground) to manage fees and repairs and maintenance issues for affordable rental properties.
- Offer to renovate private homes as long as they stay available for affordable housing.
- Develop innovative housing options for students, nurses and apprentices.
- Programs that guarantee rental incomes for landlords.
- Review and evaluate Defence Housing as an existing 'best practice' model.
- Transitional housing support for tenants.
- Invest in socially minded organisations to better engage with all parts of the housing spectrum.